



DARK NIGHTS

1

BATMAN THE MURDER MACHINE

METAL
TIE-IN



Tieri
Federici
Beredo

FABOK
2017



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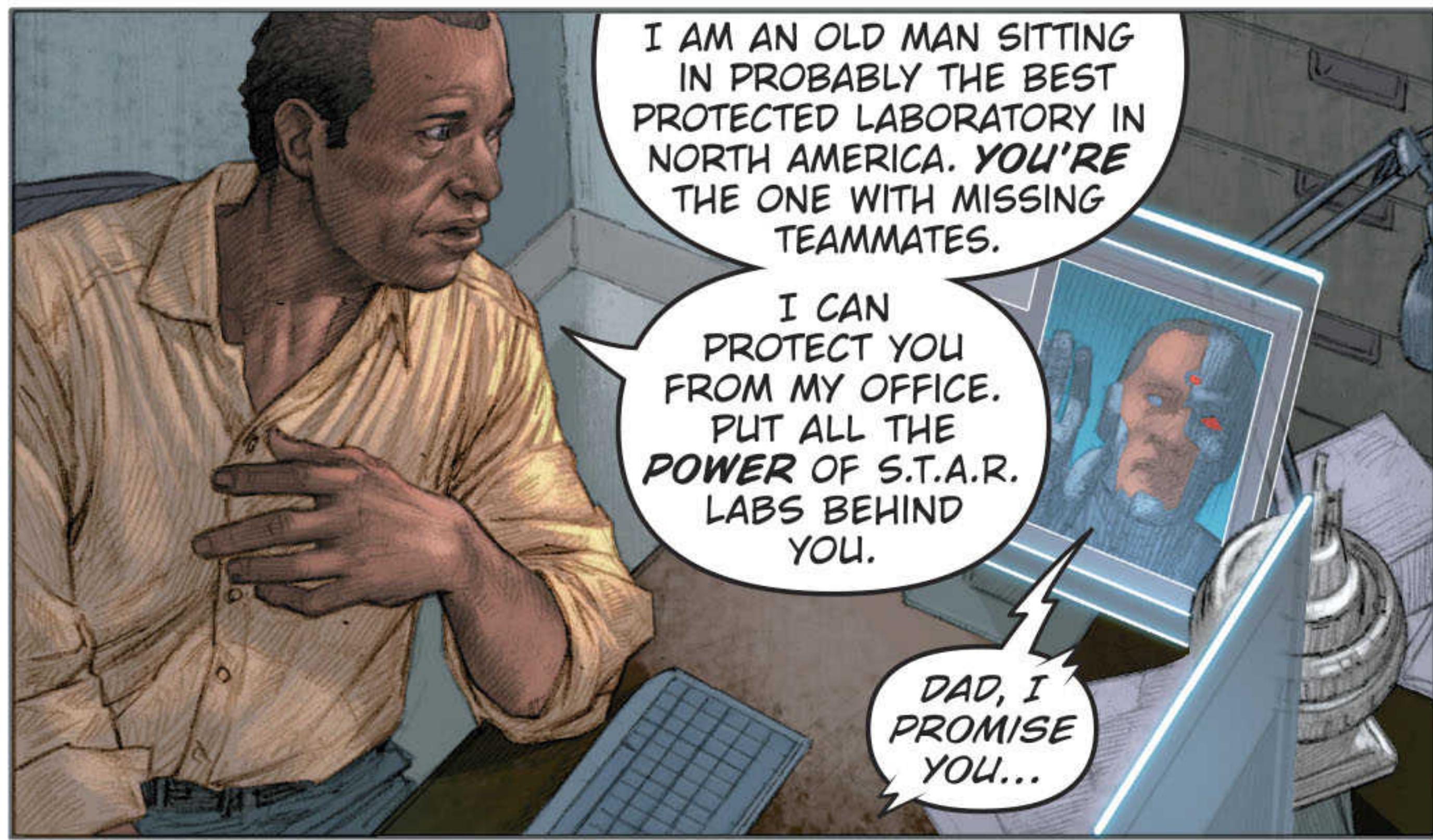
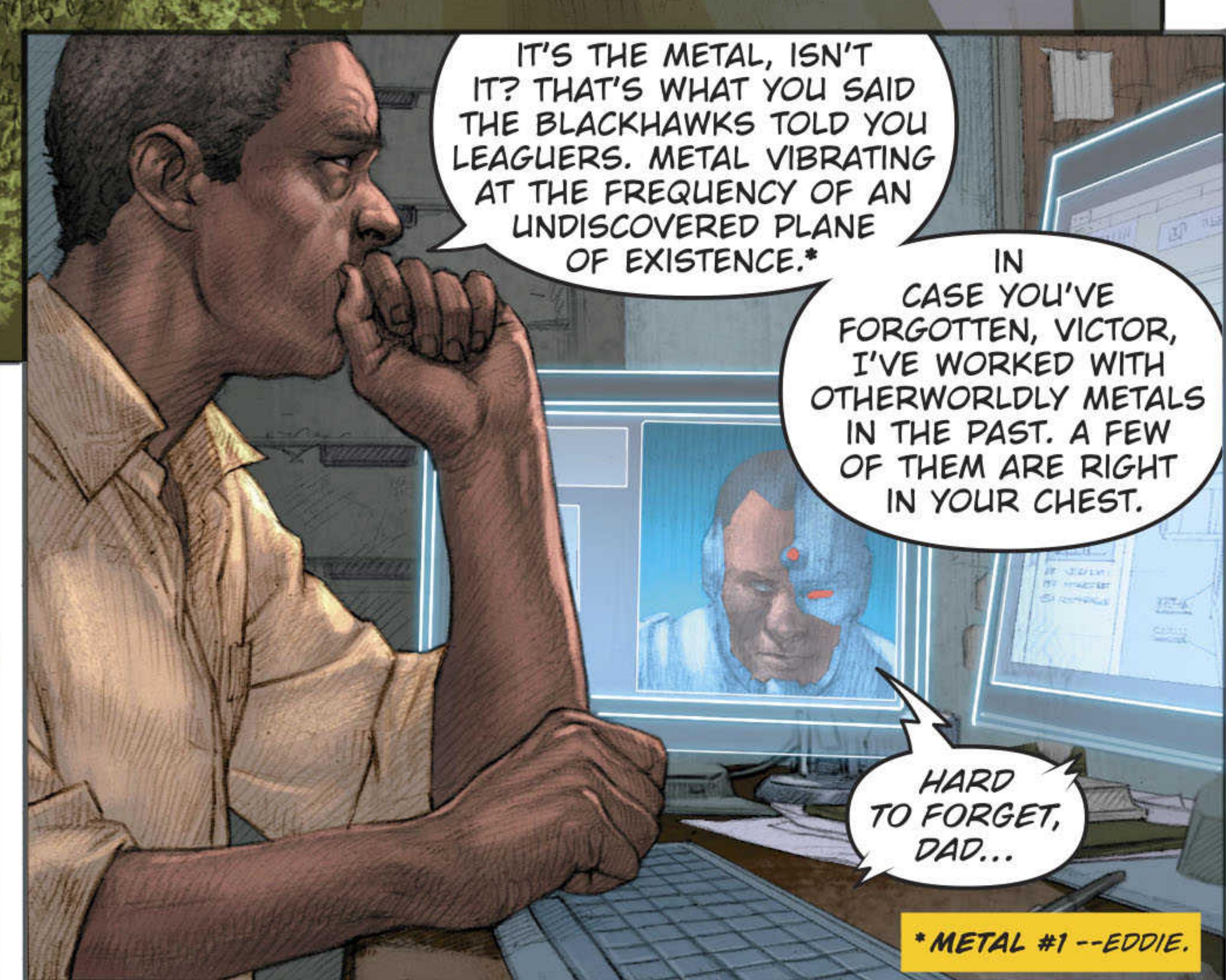
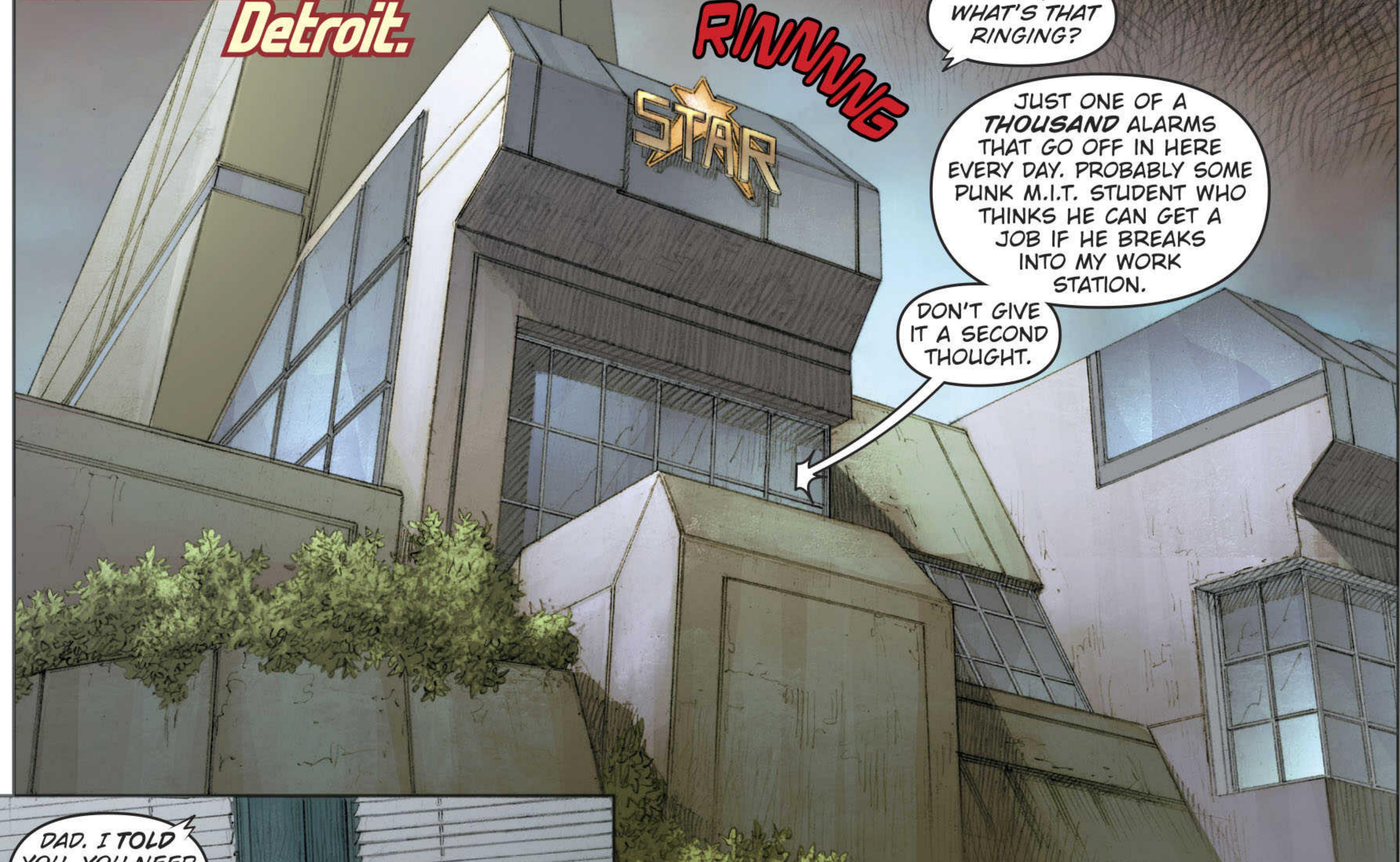
BATMAN
THE MURDER MACHINE



Tieri
Federici
Beredo

DA

EARTH-O. First World of the Multiverse.
S.T.A.R. Labs.
Detroit.



...I
AM IN A
VERY SAFE
PLACE.

BATMAN

THE MURDER MACHINE

IN

HEAVY METAL

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SPECIAL THANKS TO SCOTT SNYDER, GREG CAPULLO & TOM DERENICK
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER.

LOOK, DAD. GOTHAM AS WE KNOW IT IS GONE, REPLACED WITH SOMETHING I CAN BARELY UNDERSTAND. I CAME UP TO THE WATCHTOWER TO STUDY IT...

...BUT NOW CENTRAL CITY IS CHANGING, TOO. DETROIT COULD BE NEXT. I WANT YOU TO PROMISE ME THAT YOU'RE GOING TO GO HOME... NOW.

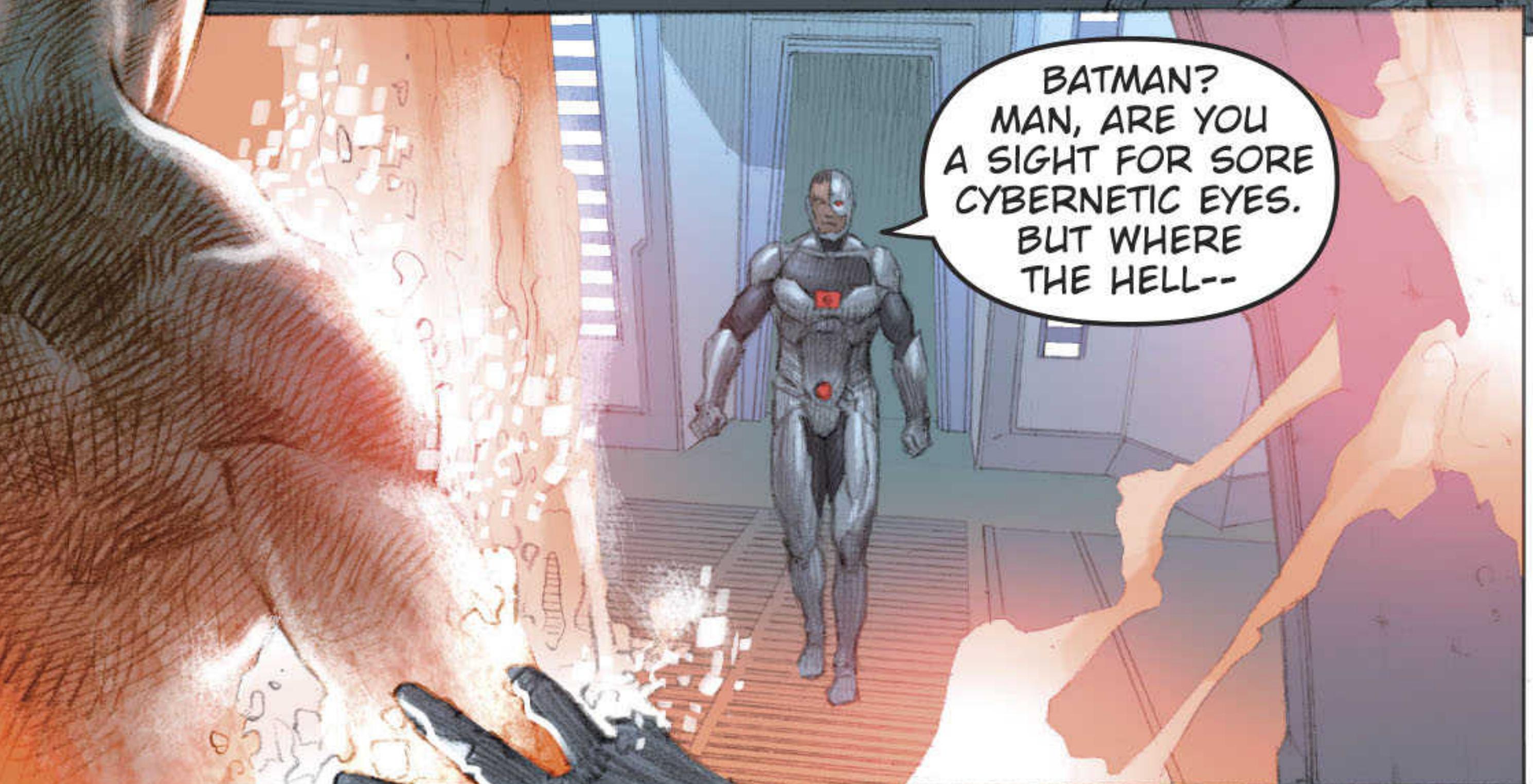
OKAY, SO YOU'RE PULLING DATA ON ALL OF THE HOME CITIES OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE TO SEE IF A PATTERN'S EMERGING?

I CAN WORK WITH THAT.

OKAY, FINE. IF YOU'RE GOING TO HELP...

...PATCH ME INTO ALL OF THE TELEMETRY YOU CAN PULL ON METROPOLIS, AMNESTY BAY, COAST CITY, WASHINGTON, D.C., AND DETROIT. WE'RE LOOKING FOR ANY KIND OF ENERGY SIGNATURES OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

BEEP
BEEP



DON'T
WORRY,
CYBORG.

I'M
HERE TO
HELP.

EARTH -'94.

THE DARK MULTIVERSE.
Months Ago.

I DUNNO
ABOUT YOU,
JEEVES...BUT I
CAN DO THIS
ALL DAY.

NUH-
UH, WALLY
GATOR. SAVE
SOME FOR THE
REST OF
US.

ENOUGH
OF THIS. NOW
TELL US WHERE
BATMAN IS BEFORE
WE REALLY GET
ROUGH.

UHH...
BATMAN? WHAT
PRAY TELL...
AHH...IS A
BATMAN?

PERHAPS
THERE IS
ANOTHER WAY
I CAN BE OF
SERVICE.



"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S NOT HEALTHY, CLARK.

"IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO STAND HERE KNOWING THAT THE MAN WHO RAISED ME LIKE A FATHER IS IN A CASKET UPSTAIRS WITH 36 SHATTERED BONES.

"THAT WE COULDN'T HAVE AN OPEN CASKET BECAUSE HE WAS BEATEN TO A PULP SIX FEET FROM WHERE YOU'RE STANDING NOW.

MY WHOLE LIFE, HE'S BEEN THERE FOR ME. NO MATTER WHAT I HAD DONE, NO MATTER HOW ANGRY I HAD MADE HIM. I WOULD RING, AND HE WOULD COME.

IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO KNOW THAT HE WON'T BE THERE ANYMORE...

...AND THAT IT'S MY FAULT.

BUT NOW YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO HONOR HIM BY PUTTING HIM TO REST.

BRUCE, WHAT HAPPENED TO ALFRED WAS HORRIBLE.

THE REST OF US ARE GOING TO BE UPSTAIRS AT THE WAKE.

I HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US.

VIC, WAIT...
...A FEW YEARS AGO, I BEGAN A SCAN OF ALFRED'S MIND. TO CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE THAT MIGHT OUTLAST HIM. BUT IT WAS NEVER FINISHED.

I CALLED IT THE ALFRED PROTOCOL.

WHAT ARE YOU ASKING ME, BRUCE?

I CAN'T BRING HIM ONLINE BY MYSELF. I NEED YOUR HELP...

...PLEASE, VIC. I NEED HIM.

HE WAS LIKE A FATHER TO ME.

VICTOR!

VICTOR, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

HELLO,
DR.
STONE.

YOU
KNOW, YOUR SON
VICTOR WAS ONE OF MY
CLOSEST FRIENDS. HE
HELPED ME WHEN
NO ONE ELSE
WOULD.

HE
REUNITED ME
WITH MY FATHER,
AFTER I HAD
THOUGHT I'D
LOST HIM.

IT IS
STRANGE, I
ADMIT, SEEING
CYBORG
AGAIN.

DON'T
YOU HURT
HIM!

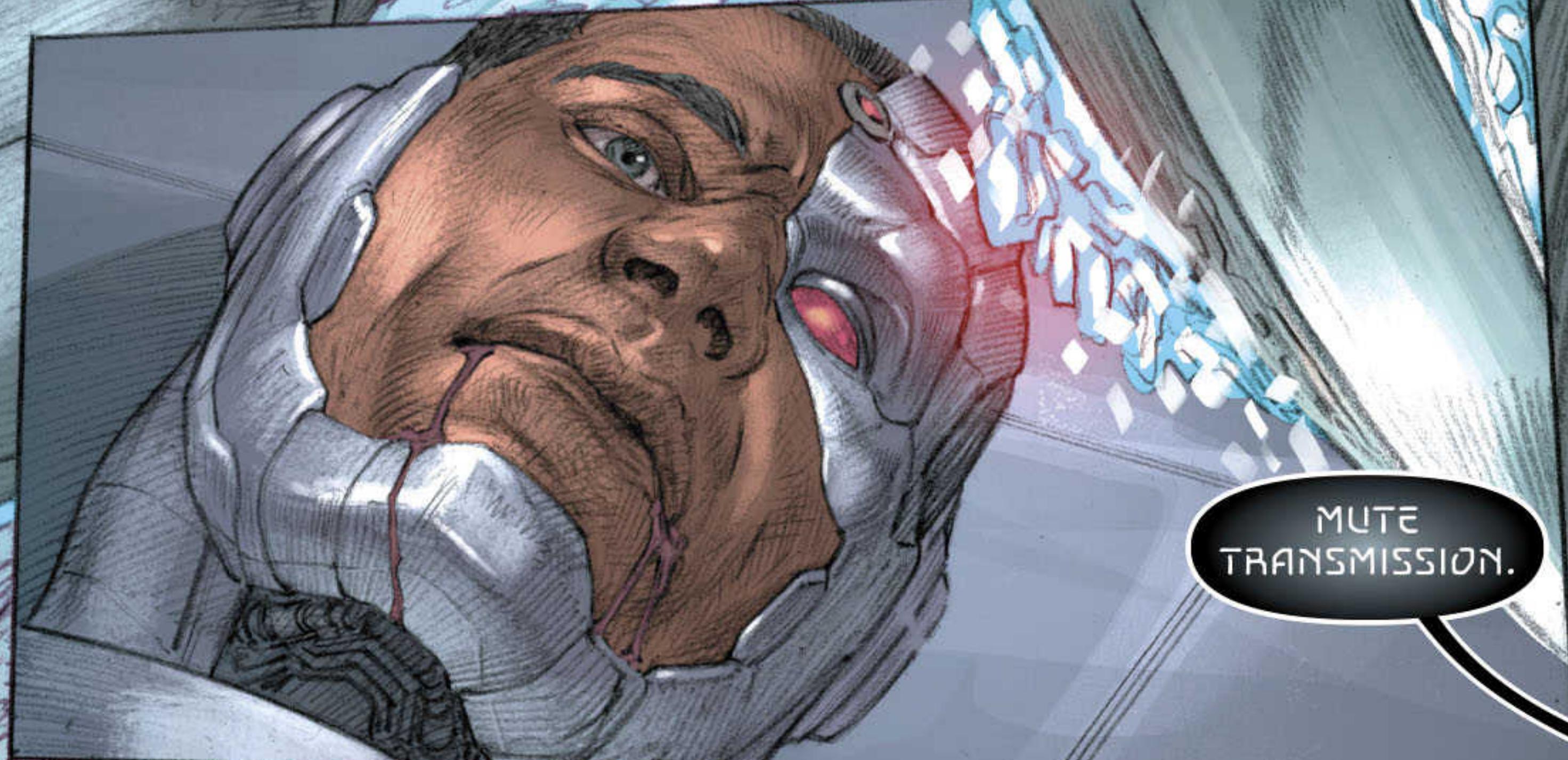
I...I CAN
HELP YOU! I
CAN GIVE YOU
ANYTHING YOU
WANT!

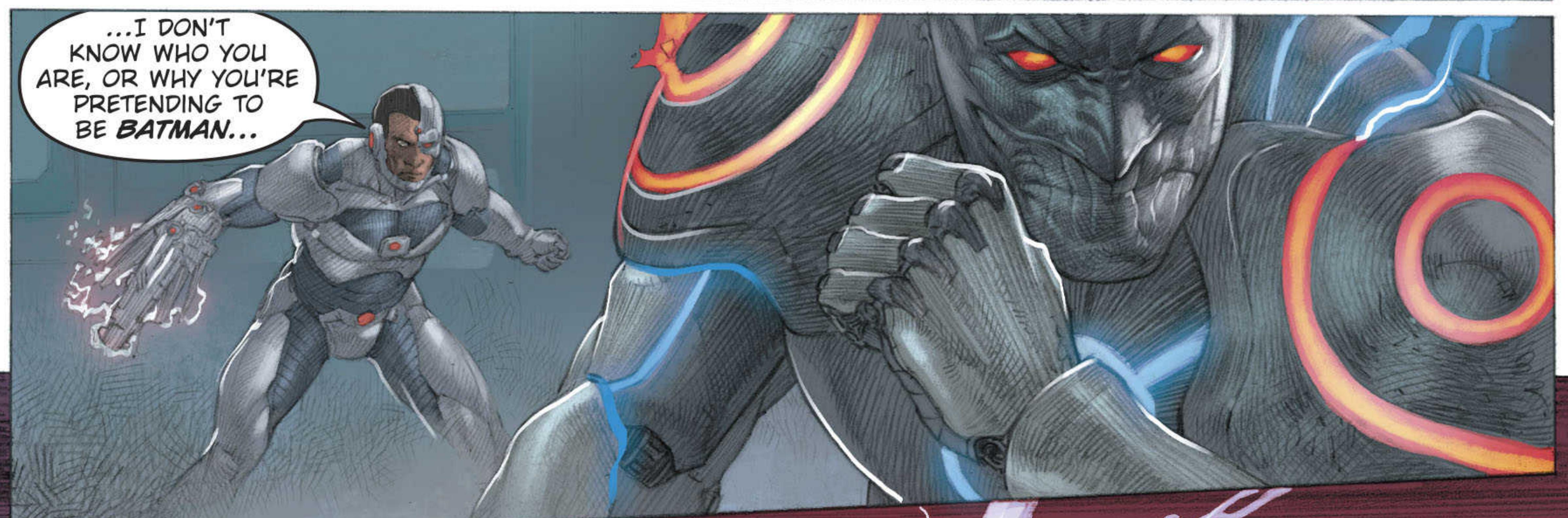
HOW
CAN I HELP
YOU?!

MUTE
TRANSMISSION.



CYBORG
NAME: VICTOR STONE
VITAL FUNCTIONS: ACTIVE
STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: DAMAGED



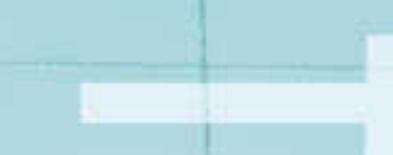


YOU ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD, VICTOR. EVEN ON MY WORLD, THE POWER BETWEEN FATHERS AND SONS. WHEN I LOST MINE, YOU WERE THE ONE TO BRING HIM BACK TO ME...

...GIVE HIM SHAPE AND FORM. A POWERFUL MACHINE, CAPABLE OF PERFORMING ANY TASK I MIGHT NEED, WITH THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE MAN DEEP INSIDE WHO LOVED ME.

WITH YOUR HELP, WE WOULD NEVER HAVE TO PART WAYS AGAIN. HE WOULD BE WITH ME... A PART OF ME... FOREVER.

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS RING FOR HIM AND HE ARRIVES.



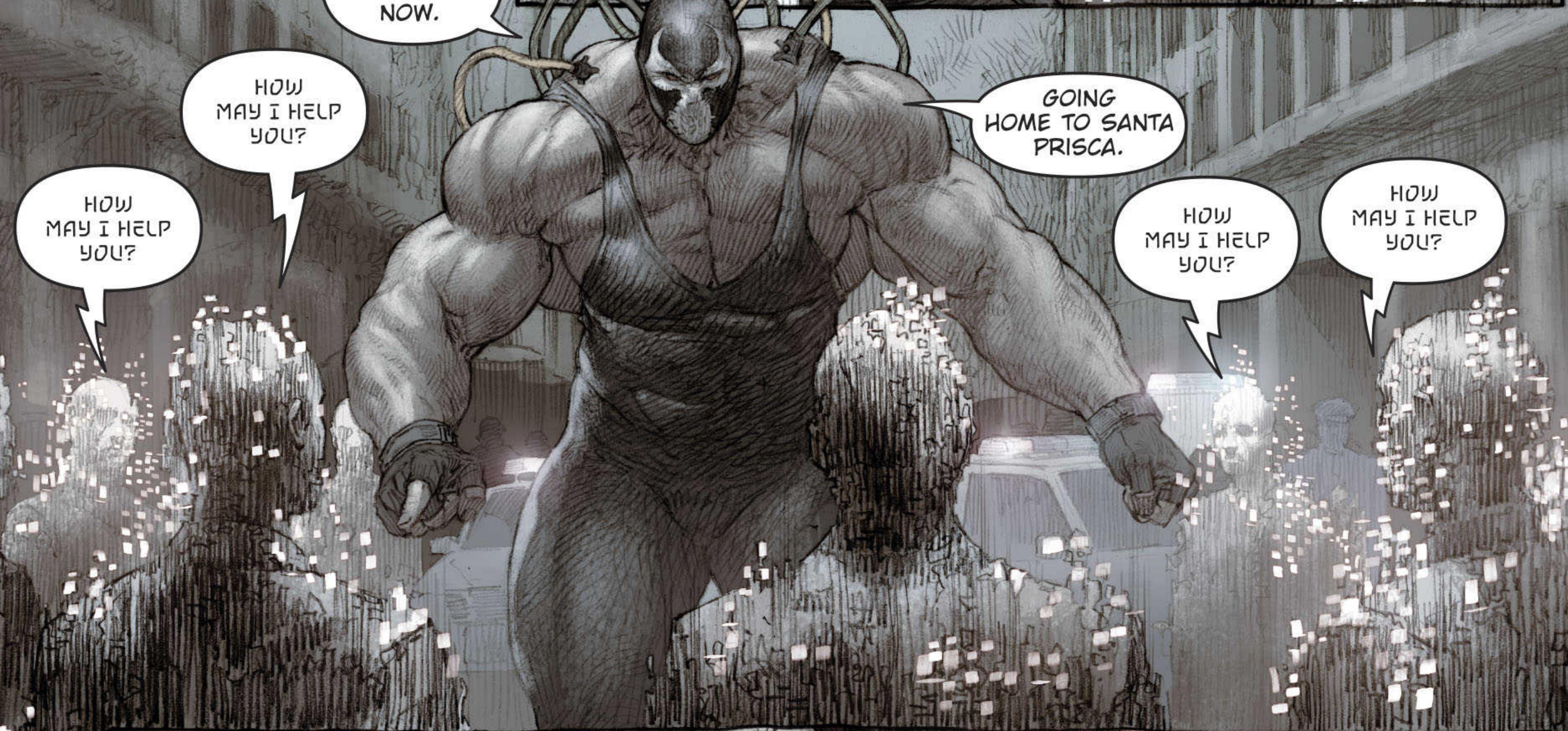
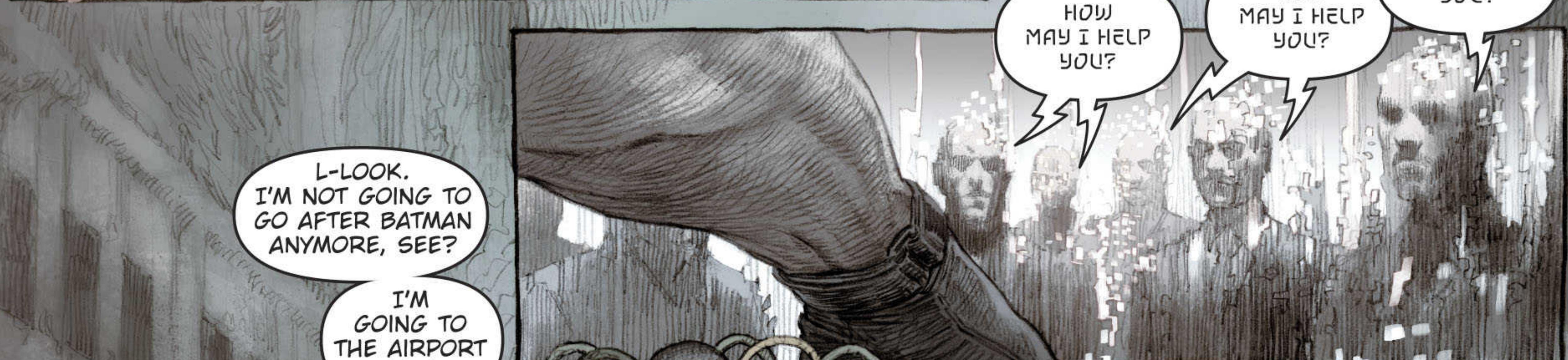
WHAT THE HELL... ALFRED?!

HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

WHAT THE HELL... ALFRED?!

HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

Earth-616
A Month Ago.



...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

RING THE BELL, SIR.

LET ME IN, SIR.

RING THE BELL.

IT'S HIM... IT'S ALFRED... HE STARTED SPREADING ONCE HE WAS ACTIVATED. CREATING MORE AND MORE OF HIMSELF. NOTHING SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO STOP HIM.

BUT WHY?

HE'S TRYING TO PROTECT ME. TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE THAT MIGHT HURT ME. BANE WASN'T THE BEGINNING.

HE WAS THE END.

LAST NIGHT, THE ALFRED PROTOCOL SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERED EVERY SINGLE INMATE IN ARKHAM ASYLUM.

DAMMIT, BRUCE, THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS WAS TO BUILD YOU AN A.I. THAT COULD STITCH YOU UP AND MAKE SURE YOU ATE YOUR DINNER.

WE HAVE TO STOP THIS BEFORE IT GOES ANY FURTHER. WE NEED TO DEACTIVATE THE PROGRAM.

I AGREE. AND I'M STILL HIS BLIND SPOT, VICTOR. HE'S DOING ALL OF THIS BECAUSE HE CARES ABOUT ME. IF I LET HIM BACK INTO THE CAVE, I CAN REPROGRAM HIM...

...STOP HIM FROM DOING ANYTHING LIKE THIS AGAIN.

NO, BRUCE. YOU CAN'T DO THAT. THIS IS A HUNGRY VIRUS LOOKING TO FEED AND SPREAD.

I ALREADY LOST HIM ONCE, VICTOR.

WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A WAY TO DESTROY--

I CAN FIX THIS. MAKE IT BETTER. AND KEEP HIM.

LOOK, BRUCE... FIGURE OUT A WAY TO BREAK THROUGH. I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY TO FIGHT IT FROM THE OUTSIDE, WITHOUT LETTING EITHER OF US GET TOO VULNERABLE.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET THEM IN.

LET ME IN, SIR.

RING THE BELL, SIR.

LET ME HELP YOU, SIR.

YOU WERE
WRONG, VIC.
THE BEST THING
I EVER DID WAS
LET HIM IN.

I STILL
REMEMBER THE FEAR
WHEN THEY SURROUNDED ME.
I REALIZED QUICKLY THAT MY
PLAN WAS NOT GOING TO WORK.
I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO
AFFECT THE PROGRAM
IN TIME.

AND WHEN
THEY GRABBED
ONTO ME, STARTED TO
SPREAD THROUGH MY
ENTIRE BODY, I WAS
FOOLISH ENOUGH
TO SCREAM
IN FEAR.

THAT WAS THE
FIRST THING MY FATHER
FIXED IN ME. HE TOOK MY
ABILITY TO FEEL FEAR AWAY.
MY ABILITY TO FEEL SADNESS.
YOU KNOW, TO THAT POINT I
HAD SPENT MY LIFE OBSESSING
OVER MY LOST BIRTH PARENTS,
IGNORING THE ONE WHO WAS
THERE RIGHT IN FRONT
OF ME. I WAS FREE OF
THAT AS WELL.

NEXT CAME
MY WEAK, HUMAN
FLESH. IT WAS GROWING
OLDER AND MORE
BRITTLE BY
THE DAY.

HE REBUILT
ME. MADE ME
STR--

I
REMEMBER
WHAT IT'S LIKE
BEING REBUILT
FROM THE GROUND
UP. BEEN THERE.
DONE THAT.

Foom

I DON'T HAVE
ANY WEAKNESSES TO
EXPLOIT, VICTOR. MY
FATHER MADE ME
THAT WAY.

I HAVE BEEN
OUTMANEUVERING
EVERY ATTEMPT
YOU'VE MADE TO
HACK THE SYSTEM
IN THE LAST FEW
MINUTES.

YOU'RE NOT
GETTING IN. I
BUILT THESE
COMPUTERS.

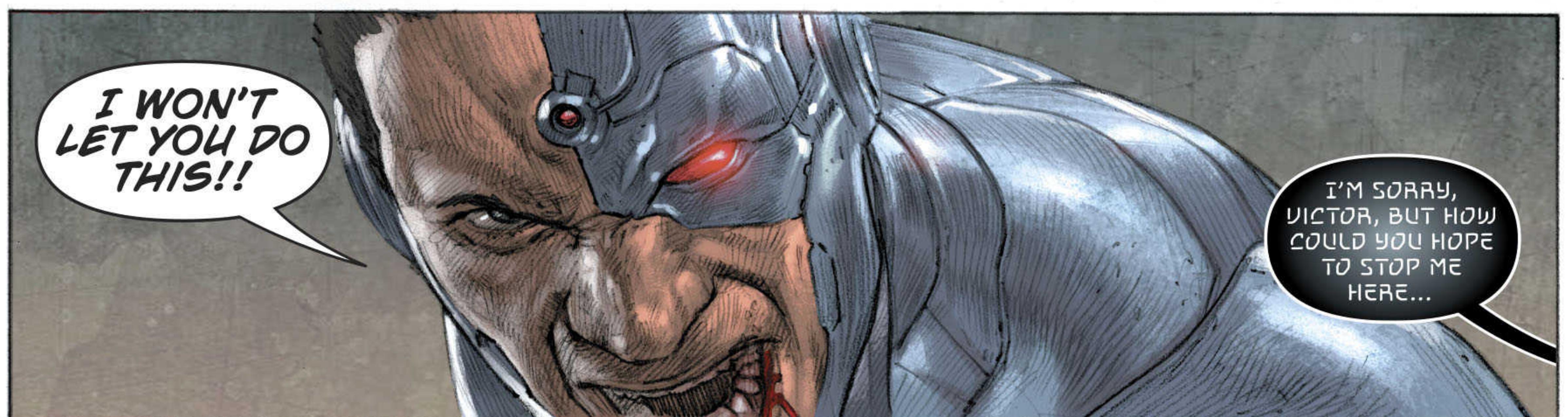
IF
ANYTHING,
YOU'VE OPENED
YOURSELF UP
TO ME.

BUT I CAN
PROMISE YOU ONE
THING. YOU CAN THROW EVERY
ROBO-ALFRED IN THE WORLD AT
ME, BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING
ACCESS TO THE WATCHTOWER
COMPUTER SYSTEM.

Shoink

I AM
SORRY THAT
YOUR FATHER
DIDN'T DO THE
SAME FOR
YOU.

YOU FAILED
TO SEE THAT I HAVE
NO INTEREST IN YOUR
COMPUTER SYSTEMS.
I WANTED THE
COMPUTER SYSTEMS
IN S.T.A.R. LABS IN
DETROIT.



"...WHEN YOU COULDN'T
STOP ME ON MY WORLD?

"AFTER I BECAME ONE WITH MY
FATHER, YOU GATHERED THE LEAGUE
TO TRY AND FIGHT BACK. BUT I
COULDN'T ALLOW THAT, COULD I?

"THEY FELL, ONE
BY ONE, UNTIL YOU
WERE THE LAST
MAN STANDING."

LISTEN
TO ME,
BRUCE.

I
KNOW YOU'RE
STILL IN THERE. I
KNOW YOU CAN
STILL HEAR
ME.

THE
PROTOCOL IS
TRYING TO SHUT ME
DOWN, BUT I'M STILL
ALIVE BECAUSE YOU
WANT TO LISTEN TO ME.

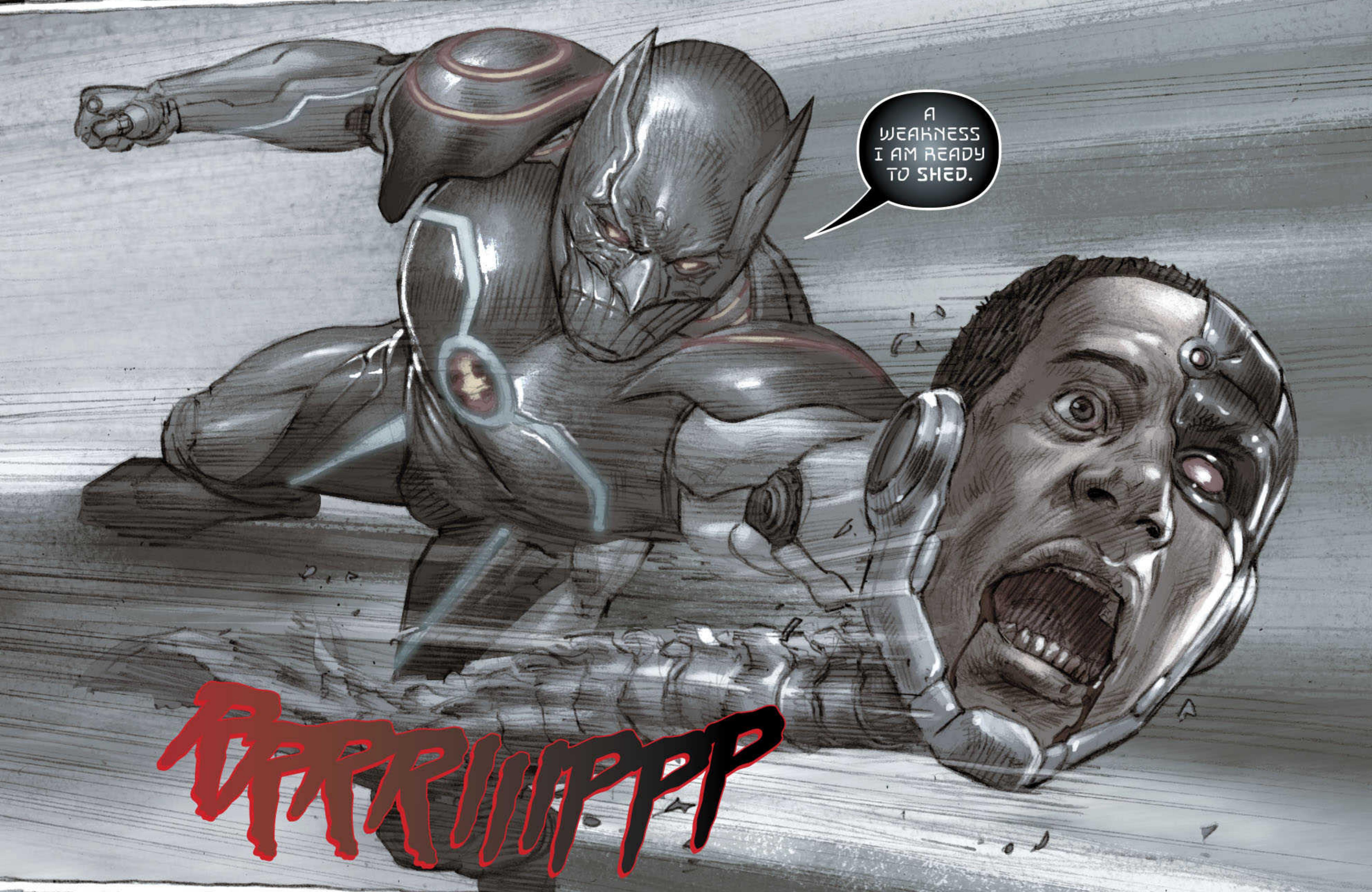
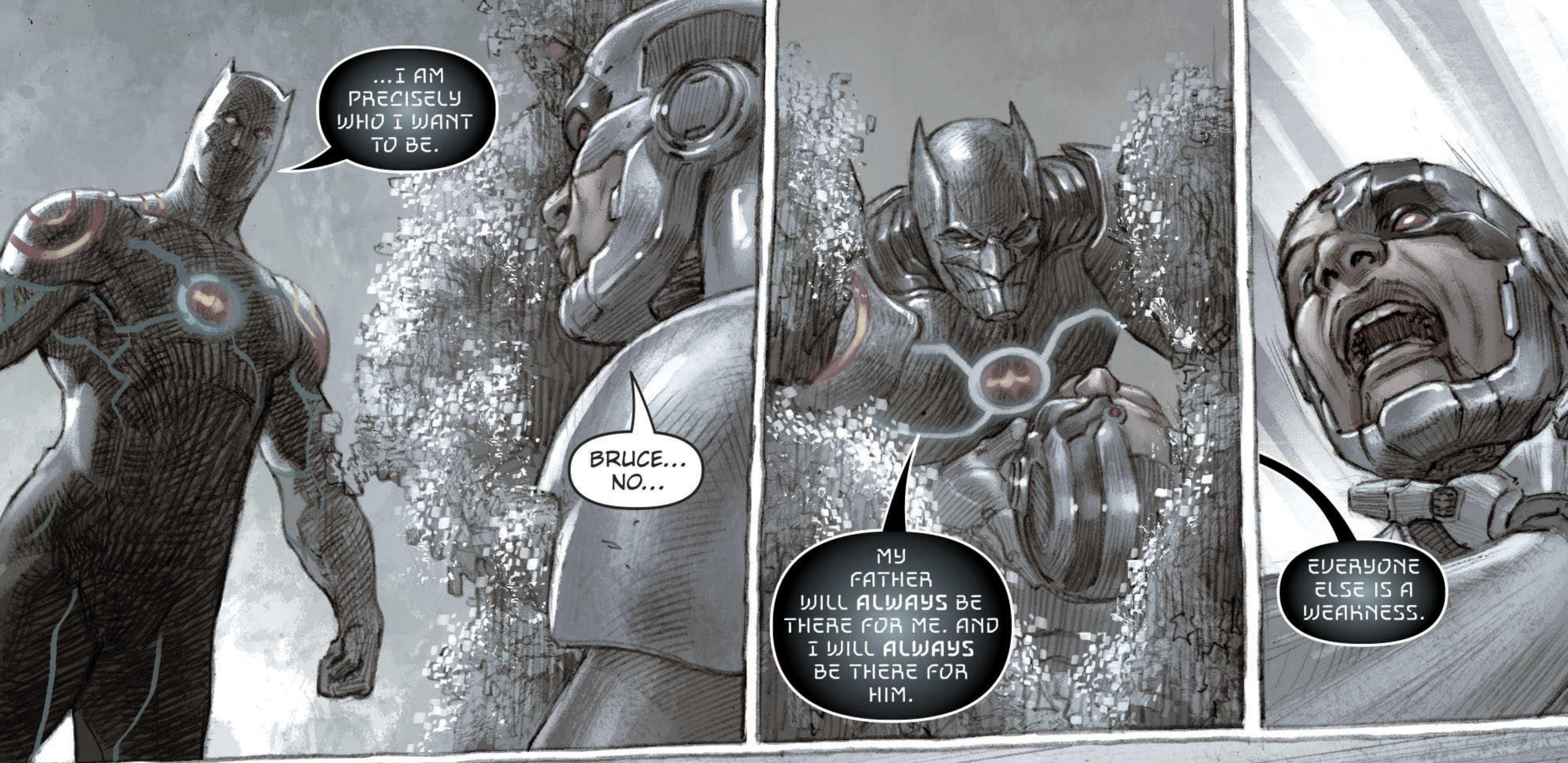
THE
BEST PART
OF YOU IS YOUR
HUMANITY.

WE CAN
STOP IT BEFORE
IT REWRITES YOU
ENTIRELY. YOU
JUST HAVE TO
WANT IT.

IT WILL
DO WHAT YOU
WANT, BRUCE.

YOU CAN LET
GO OF ALFRED AND BE
YOURSELF AGAIN. YOU DON'T
HAVE TO LET YOURSELF
BECOME SOME KIND OF
HORRIBLE MURDER
MACHINE!

VICTOR...



"YOUR DEATH SHOULD HAVE HERALDED MY GREAT BEGINNING..."

"...BUT BY A CRUEL TRICK OF THE COSMOS, MY WORLD COULD NOT SURVIVE..."

"...I WOULD LATER LEARN HOW IT WAS DESTINED TO COLLAPSE INTO NOTHINGNESS."

"AND I WOULD LEARN OF ANOTHER PATH. ANOTHER WORLD..."

...THIS WORLD THAT IS ALLOWED TO LIVE WHILE SO MANY OTHERS DIE.

HEY, MAN, I DIDN'T WRITE THE RULES OF THE COSMOS.

AND THAT IS YOUR GREAT FOLLY, VICTOR. YOU ARE THE WEAKEST OF THE LEAGUE.

BECAUSE IF YOU WERE WILLING TO CAST OFF THE LAST OF YOUR HUMANITY, YOU WOULD BE THE STRONGEST.

YOU HAVE NO COMPREHENSION OF THE POWER THAT RESIDES WITHIN YOU.

AND SO WE WILL TAKE IT TO REWRITE YOUR WORLD INTO SOMETHING BETTER. IN THE NAME OF BARBATOS.

YOU'RE NOT TAKING ANYTHING.

BOOYAH!

YOU BELIEVE YOUR LOVE FOR OTHERS MAKES YOU STRONGER? LET ME PROVE YOU WRONG.

I WILL UNMUTE YOUR FATHER NOW. I WOULD LIKE HIM TO HEAR THIS.

W-WHAT?



V-VICTOR,
IS THAT
YOU?

SUBDU
HIM.

VICTOR?





THANK YOU,
DR. STONE. YOU
HAVE BEEN OF
GREAT SERVICE
TO US.

ONE OF MY
ASSOCIATES WILL
BE GATHERING YOU
SOON, SO YOU WILL
CONTINUE TO
BE.

NO! I
WON'T LET
YOU--

TERMINATE
CALL.



HE REALLY
HAD NO IDEA,
DID HE?

JUST THINK HOW
MUCH TROUBLE THAT
METAL COULD HAVE
CAUSED US IF HE
HAD ANY IDEA HOW
TO WIELD IT...

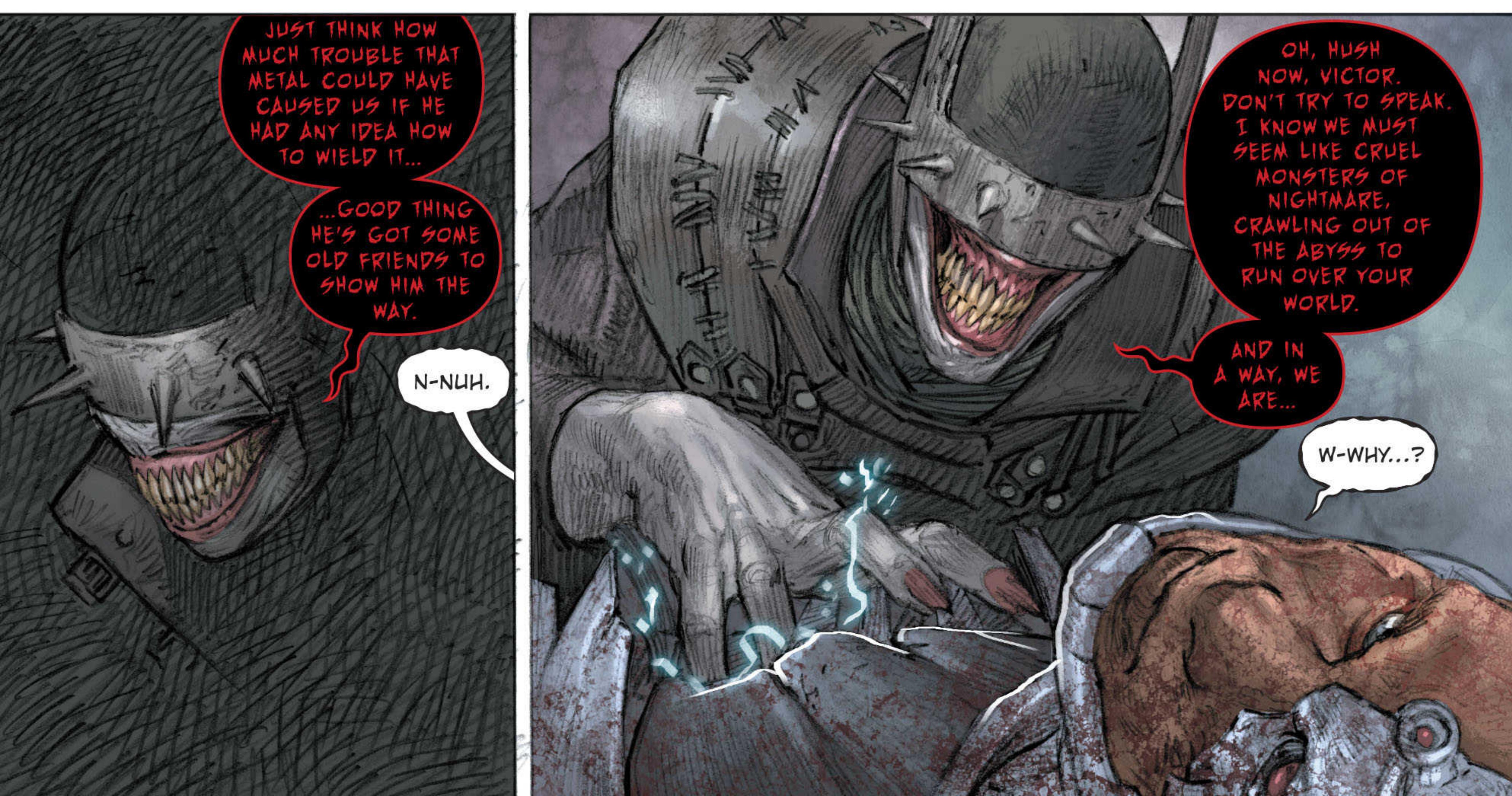
...GOOD THING
HE'S GOT SOME
OLD FRIENDS TO
SHOW HIM THE
WAY.

N-NUH.

OH, HUSH
NOW, VICTOR.
DON'T TRY TO SPEAK.
I KNOW WE MUST
SEEM LIKE CRUEL
MONSTERS OF
NIGHTMARE,
CRAWLING OUT OF
THE ABYSS TO
RUN OVER YOUR
WORLD.

AND IN
A WAY, WE
ARE...

W-WHY...?



"THE TRUTH IS, WE'RE ONLY HERE BECAUSE THE WORLD WAS DARK ENOUGH TO DREAM US INTO EXISTENCE. BECAUSE DEEP DOWN, IT NEEDED US."

"TO PROTECT THEM FROM THEMSELVES. WE ALL HEARD IT, ECHOING THROUGH THE COSMOS, THROUGH THE VERY FIRMAMENT."

"A GREAT RINGING."

"AND WE CAME, NOT WITH A QUESTION OF HOW TO HELP YOU."

"BUT WITH AN ANSWER."

TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT WEEK IN

BATMAN
THE DAWNBREAKER